

REMARKS

I. IN THE OFFICE ACTION

In the Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 1, 3-12, 14, 15, and 17-20. However, as discussed in greater detail below, the Examiner maintained the rejections of claims 21-31.

With respect to the reasons for rejection of claims 21, 25, 29, and 31, the Examiner rejected those claims under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,974,875 issued to Herd et al. ("Herd"). The Examiner alleges that Herd discloses in figure 9 a pressure line breechblock-coupling member with a releasably connected female end 351 ("251" in specification) and a male end 301 in fluid communication with riser equipment 212 and the pressure line diameter greater than two inches (col. 3, line 47). Office Action, page 2.

The Examiner rejected claim 30 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Herd. The Examiner states that Herd discloses a pressure line breechblock-coupling member with releasably connected female end 351 and male end 301 in fluid communication with riser equipment 212 but not end 301 as female and end 351 end as male. Office Action, page 3. The Examiner then takes "Official Notice" that it is "well known to make connections with male and female arrangements, and to make either connection member a male or female element." *Id.* Accordingly, the Examiner concludes that "it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the connection with male end 351 and female end 301 since it is well known to do so." *Id.*

The Examiner rejected claims 22-24 and 26-28 under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Herd in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,530,430 issued to Reynolds (“Reynolds”). The Examiner states that Herd discloses a pressure line breech block coupling member with a releasably connected female end 351 and a male end 301 in fluid communication with riser equipment 212 but not a tensioner, slip-joint assembly, or slip-joint tensioner. Office Action, page 3. The Examiner then states that “Reynolds presents a tensioner 70, slip-joint assembly 90, or slip-joint tensioner 30 associated with a blowout preventer.” *Id.* The Examiner then concludes that “it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the Herd et al. connection in the Reynolds system as indicated by applicant at page 18, lines 6-7 of the specification. Office Action, page 4.

II. DISCUSSION OF REJECTIONS/OBJECTIONS

Applicant appreciates the courtesy extended to Applicant by the Examiner during telephone conferences on November 9 and 11, 2005. As discussed during those telephone conferences, Applicant submitted that the rejections of claims 22-24 and 26-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) were improper because the motivation to combine the two references identified by the Examiner impermissibly originated from Applicant’s own disclosure in the application. After investigation and review of the file, the Examiner acknowledged that Applicant was correct and invited Applicant to file this Amendment to amend dependent claims 22-24 and 26-28 to include all of the limitations contained in the base claim and any intervening claims. In response to the Examiner’s invitation,

Application Serial No. 10/601,946
Amendment After Final Rejection dated November 15, 2005
In response to Office Action mailed October 21, 2005

Applicant files this Amendment to amend claims 22-24 and 26-31 so that claims 22-24 and 26-28 are independent claims and claims 29-31 depend from independent claim 28. Applicant submits that amended claims 22-24 and 26-31 are not obvious under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) because the disclosure of the pending patent application cannot form the basis for concluding that references are combinable. *See In re Dow Chem. Co.*, 837 F.2d 469, 473 (Fed. Cir. 1988) (both suggestion and reasonable expectation of success must be found in the prior art, and not in the applicant's disclosure); *ACS Hosp. Sys., Inc. v. Montefiore Hosp.*, 732 F.2d 1572, 1577 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (patent cannot be the source for teaching or suggestion the combination of prior art). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 22-24 and 26-31 are in condition for allowance. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 22-24 and 26-31 be withdrawn.

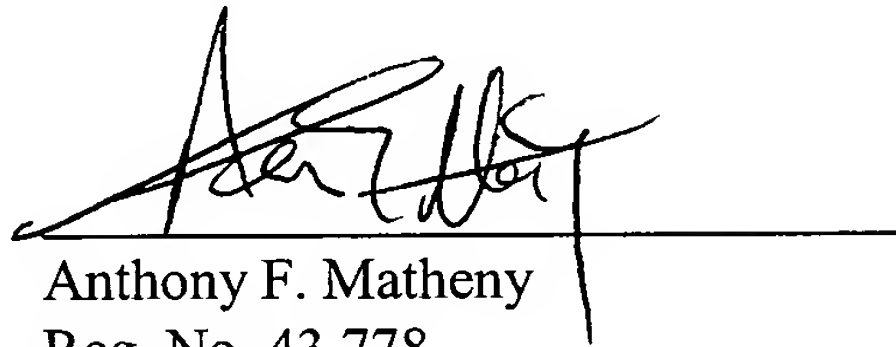
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 22-24 and 26-31 be withdrawn and a timely notice of allowance of claims 1, 3-12, 14, 15, 17-20, 22-24, and 26-31 be issued. In order to expedite the examination of this application, Applicant requests the Examiner to contact the undersigned at (713) 220-4168 to discuss any matters that can be resolved by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

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